

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

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1312
HAK
CH 1017
Smith
INFORMATION

August 14, 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. KISSINGER

FROM: Helmut Sonnenfeldt

SUBJECT: Troubles over the Dutch Nuclear Propulsion Issue

Ken BeLieu returned the basic correspondence on the Dutch nuclear propulsion problem to you on August 12, together with a memorandum noting that several members of the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy have expressed "intense opposition" to our proposed consultations with the Dutch (Tab A). BeLieu also mentioned that it was his understanding from the staff of the Joint Committee that the "subject is now in suspense."

The subject, as you know, is now before an interagency working group charged with defining the area in which the US might move to assist the Dutch in this regard, and studying the various consequences for ourselves and the Dutch. The matter is "in suspense" only to the extent that the Navy -- according to my State Department informants -- is dragging its feet on the whole operation. The working group had hoped to have a draft by late August, but prospects are now quite uncertain.

All this leads me to reiterate that at some point in this process either you or the President or both will have to do some personal work on the key members of the Joint Committee if we are to avoid the development of a pitched battle over the Dutch nuclear propulsion issue. I suggest that you discuss this whole issue with Eliot Richardson at an early opportunity.

MAY CONTAIN CONGRESSIONAL MATERIAL

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DOE, DOS, NSS, & NAVY
Review Completed

*As a memo for
President about
what needs to be done*

9-6-69

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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

August 12, 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR HENRY KISSINGER

From: Kenneth E. BeLieu *Ken*

Subject: U. S. -Dutch talks on Nuclear Propulsion - troubles ahead
with Congress

1. I am returning basic correspondence to your office along with:
2. A copy of a Secret letter of 18 June 1969 from Chairman Chet Holifield which clearly states his position.
3. Several members of the Joint AEC Committee have approached me with their intense opposition to the action described.
4. In discussions yesterday with Staff of Joint AEC, I understand subject is now in suspense. If so, well and good -- if not, we indeed can expect future trouble.

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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM FROM BRYCE N. HARLOW

DATE: 6/20

FOR ACTION:

FOR INFORMATION ONLY:

Bill Timman

ACTION REQUESTED:

1. All necessary action, no return ☒

2. Designated action, and return to me:

Comments _____

Draft reply for

signature of _____

Prepare agenda and Brief _____

Other _____

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After your recent meeting with Dutch Prime Minister de Jong, the press reported an understanding had been reached to "study the possibility of closer cooperation between our two countries in the field of nuclear propulsion." The Under Secretaries Committee of the National Security Council is now studying ways to implement the above decision, and is preparing recommendations for your approval.

In connection with the upcoming decision on this matter, I believe it is most important that you be aware of the extreme sensitivity of the Congress on this issue. The Joint Committee on Atomic Energy is unanimously opposed to further sharing of naval nuclear propulsion technology on grounds of national security. Congressman Chet Holifield, the current Chairman of the Committee, Craig Hosmer, the ranking minority member, and Senators Pastore, Anderson, Jackson and Aiken are particularly strong in their opposition. The Joint Committee has the understanding that the Defense Department, Joint Chiefs of Staff, CIA, and the Atomic Energy Commission are opposed to such disclosure while only the State Department appears to favor disclosure of this sensitive technology.

I am attaching a copy of a letter dated June 18, 1969, which Chet Holifield sent to the Secretary of State. I believe this best sums up the Committee's attitude. A decision to disclose United States naval nuclear propulsion technology to the Dutch would be unpopular with those in Congress concerned about the preservation of the United States strategic deterrent as well as with those who opposed further proliferation of strategic weapons systems abroad. Another issue which would come to the fore is that once the United States authorized transmission of nuclear submarine technology to the Dutch other NATO nations would be quick to request the same data.

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PHET HOLIFIELD, CALIF.,
CHAIRMAN
MELVIN PRICE, ILL.
WAYNE N. ASPINALL, COLO.
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EDWARD J. BAUSER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

SECRET**Congress of the United States****JOINT COMMITTEE ON ATOMIC ENERGY**

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

June 18, 1969

JOHN O. PASTORE, R.I.,
VICE CHAIRMAN
RICHARD B. RUSSELL, GA.
CLINTON P. ANDERSON, N. MEX.
ALBERT GORE, TENN.
HENRY M. JACKSON, WASH.
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WALLACE F. BENNETT, UTAH
CARL T. CURTIS, NEBR.
NORRIS COTTON, N.H.

THIS DOCUMENT CONSISTS OF 3 PAGES.COPY 2 OF 2, SERIES BPersonal and Confidential

Honorable William P. Rogers
The Secretary of State
Washington, D. C. 20520

This material contains information affecting the national defense of the United States within the meaning of the espionage laws, Title 18, U.S.C., Secs. 793 and 794, the transmission or revelation of which in any manner to an unauthorized person is prohibited by law.

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I am taking this means to convey to you the serious concern I and other members of the Joint Committee have over the turn of events concerning the possibility of our providing assistance to the Dutch in the field of naval nuclear propulsion.

For over a decade there has been a continuing effort by several of our NATO allies to obtain assistance in acquiring a nuclear submarine capability. Over the years we have received requests from Great Britain, France, Italy and the Netherlands. As you know, only in the case of Great Britain did we provide such assistance and this was done solely because of our special relationship with them in the development of the atomic bomb. In the case of the French we did supply them with nuclear fuel but no technology. Numerous requests from the Dutch and the Italians have been rejected.

This matter has come up through four Administrations, and each time the Joint Committee has taken the position that the disadvantages of providing nuclear propulsion technology to a foreign nation (other than Great Britain) far outweigh the diplomatic political or marginal military benefits which might accrue to the United States. For the past ten years this position has been adhered to by the United States Government in its dealings with foreign nations.

After learning that this subject was about to be discussed by a new Administration with Dutch Prime Minister DeJong and Foreign Minister Luns, on May 14, 1969 I wrote to Glenn Seaborg, Chairman

MAY CONTAIN CONGRESSIONAL MATERIAL

SECRET**JOINT COMMITTEE ON ATOMIC ENERGY**

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of the Atomic Energy Commission. In my letter I reiterated the Joint Committee's long standing opposition to the proliferation of submarine nuclear technology, and I said that if circumstances involving national security have developed which the Executive Department believes are sufficient to change our position on this matter, then the Committee wishes to be advised at the earliest possible moment.

The Atomic Energy Commission responded to my letter on May 26, 1969, stating:

" . . . the position recommended by the agencies concerned is that the Dutch be advised that we are not in a position to assist them in developing a naval nuclear propulsion program. "

Subsequently because of ambiguous press reports indicating that perhaps the Dutch had obtained more concessions during their Washington visit aimed toward obtaining nuclear propulsion data, I again wrote to Glenn Seaborg sending copies to you and Secretary Laird. Assistant Secretary of State for Congressional Relations Macomber replied on June 13, 1969, stating:

" . . . the President and the Dutch Prime Minister decided to study the possibility of closer cooperation between our two countries in the field of nuclear propulsion. "

I can only conclude from these differing positions that there has been a significant change in the Administration's policy following the meetings with the Dutch. If this is a correct interpretation and, if in fact, the Administration intends to provide technical assistance to the Dutch, then I believe that such a step could seriously jeopardize the security of the United States.

The Joint Committee has questioned the wisdom of proliferating naval nuclear propulsion technology primarily because of our concern that the effectiveness of our nuclear forces would be diminished and that of the Soviet Union enhanced. Nuclear submarine technology has been one of the key factors in making our POLARIS weapon system the major

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deterrent we have against nuclear war. To expand the number of nations possessing this technology would certainly increase the probability that such information will fall into the hands of a potential enemy. In this regard, the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency stated on February 20, 1969, before the Joint Committee that:

"I think anything you give to NATO, you can assume you are giving to the Soviets."

I would hope that this judgment is a conservative one and may not apply equally to all our NATO allies. Nevertheless it is a factor and it would greatly weaken our national security if the Soviets were able to discern the strengths and weaknesses of our POLARIS submarine because we had handed the blueprints to foreign country(s). It should be pointed out that in order to assist the Dutch in this field it would be necessary to go into great detail on all phases of design, production, testing, training and operation. In addition, granting aid to the Dutch would certainly open doors for similar requests from other NATO nations.

The sustained invulnerability of our POLARIS weapon system is fragile. Seemingly insignificant leaks of security information on technical details of our nuclear submarines could provide the Soviet Union with the means of detecting and destroying our POLARIS fleet.

The Committee certainly understands the dilemmas the Executive Department faces when allies ask for assistance and it is reasonable to indicate to foreign officials that the United States will "study" the possibility of closer cooperation. However, what concerns the Committee in this case is that such a promise may open a nuclear propulsion "Pandora's Box" which may ultimately cause us to lose one of the few remaining systems in which we clearly have world leadership.

I would appreciate your advising me of the Administration's ultimate objective in this matter.

Sincerely yours,

Chet Holifield
Chairman

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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

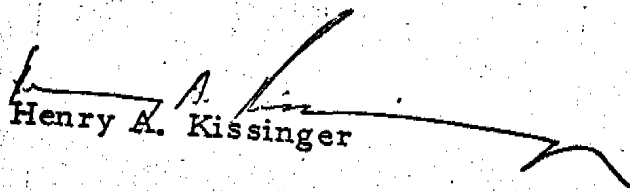
June 10, 1969

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MEMORANDUM FOR

The Honorable Glenn T. Seaborg
Chairman, Atomic Energy Commission

I wanted to call your attention to a report that the Atomic Energy Commission forwarded a letter to the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy on May 26, which left the firm indication that there would be no change in our past position with respect to cooperation with the Dutch in the field of nuclear propulsion. The problem of communicating internal executive deliberations before a final decision is compounded in this case because the President's eventual position modified what had been told the Committee.


Henry A. Kissinger

Starlow
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MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

JUN 19 1969

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June 3, 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. KISSINGER

FROM: Helmut Sonnenfeldt *JS*SUBJECT: US-Dutch Talks on Nuclear Propulsion: Trouble Ahead
with Congress

As you know, the President and the Dutch have agreed as follows:

"We decided to study the possibility of closer cooperation between our two countries in the field of nuclear propulsion."

After the Under Secretaries Committee reviewed the matter just before the Dutch visit and decided to recommend to the President a non-committal line, the AEC, over State Department objection, sent to the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy the letter at Tab A. This letter left the firm implication that there would be no change in our past negative position and drew a response from Chairman Holifield recasting the Executive's supposed position in even more negative terms (Tab B). Holifield can now legitimately claim to have been misled.

I do not know by what authority the AEC made its communication to the Congress of an internal Executive position before that position was approved by the President and in a way which it had reason to believe could mislead the Congress about the President's actual position.

The damage is done now and I am afraid there is serious trouble ahead with Holifield, who wields enormous power.

I think you should call this breach of discipline to Seaborg's attention.

Note to Seaborg
Paymer - WBSA -
OK to write

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CHET HOLIFIELD, CALIF.,
CHAIRMAN
MELVIN PRICE, ILL.
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Congress of the United States

JOINT COMMITTEE ON ATOMIC ENERGY

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

May 26, 1969

THIS DOCUMENT CONSISTS OF 1 PAGES.

COPY 2 OF 4, SERIES 4

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JOHN D. EASTON, N.H.,
VICE CHAIRMAN
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HENRY M. JACKSON, WASH.
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WALLACE F. DUFFINETT, UTAH
CARL T. CURTIS, NEBR.
NORRIS COTTON, N.H.

Honorable Glenn T. Seaborg
Chairman
U. S. Atomic Energy Commission
Washington, D. C.

8285

Dear Dr. Seaborg:

This will acknowledge your letter of May 26, 1969, advising the Committee of the position recommended by the concerned Executive agencies with respect to the Dutch request for U.S. assistance in naval nuclear propulsion. As described in your letter, the United States position is that "we are not in a position to assist them [the Dutch] in developing a naval nuclear propulsion program," and that the Executive Department would not hold out hope or prospect for change in the U.S. position.

I am gratified that the Executive agencies concerned have adopted this straightforward position, which I sincerely hope will put this longstanding issue to rest.

I assume that any discussion between Admiral Fletcher and the high Dutch officials named in your letter would be confined to broad and general information, and would be carefully arranged to preclude disclosure of any naval nuclear propulsion information.

It would be appreciated if you would continue to keep me advised of any further developments in this matter.

Sincerely yours,

MAY CONTAIN
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MATERIAL

Chet Holifield
Chairman

cc Hon. William P. Rogers,
Secretary of State

1641

This document consists of _____ pages
 No. 1 of 2 Copies, Series B

MAY 26 1969

Mr. Edward J. Bauser
 Executive Director
 Joint Committee on Atomic Energy
 Congress of the United States

Dear Mr. Bauser:

In accordance with the request made in Chairman Hollifield's letter of May 14 that the Joint Committee be advised of any consultations to be held with the Dutch on the matter of naval nuclear propulsion, we would like to advise you of the discussions which are scheduled to take place by the Dutch Prime Minister De Jong and Foreign Minister Luns in Washington on May 27 and 28.

The Dutch are expected to raise the question of nuclear submarine cooperation. The position recommended by the agencies concerned is that the Dutch be advised we are not in a position to assist them in developing a naval nuclear propulsion program. Without holding out hope or prospect for change in the U.S. position, and without any commitment, the matter may be reviewed and if our position should change, we will let the Dutch know. If requested, Admiral Rickover is prepared to talk to either the Prime Minister, Foreign Minister, or Defense Minister in general terms within the limits of our current policy about financial implications as well as training and education requirements.

We will advise you of any significant developments which result from these discussions.

Sincerely,

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Myron E. Kratzer
 Assistant General Manager
 for International Activities

MAY CONTAIN
 CONGRESSIONAL
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cc: W. Lehmann, Dept. of State

GROUP 1

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 downgrading and
 declassification

This material contains information affecting the
 United States within the
 laws, Title 18, U.S.C.,